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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

Second and third periodic reports of States parties

Addendum

95-39108

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report covers the years from 1983 to 1994, and therefore comprises the second and third periodic reports that Cuba is required to submit to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, as stipulated in article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

2. Population statistics and some aspects of the country's socio-economic development are set out below and will be developed more fully in subsequent sections.

3. At the end of 1994, Cuba, which covers an area of 110 869 Km^2, had a population estimated at 10 962 959 inhabitants, with a growth rate of 0.98 per 100 inhabitants, the projected figure for the year 2000 being 11 500 000 inhabitants.

4. The gender breakdown is as follows: of the total population, 50.2 per cent are males and 49.8 per cent females, the male/female ratio being 1 100 males to every 1 000 females, at both the national and the provincial levels.

5. The geographical distribution is such that 74.3 per cent of the population lives in urban areas and 25.7 per cent in rural areas.

6. In all the country's provinces, rural areas have a higher proportion of men than women.

7. Since 1985, the birth rate has been the main factor in population growth.

8. Life expectancy at birth, which is determined by an overall improvement in living conditions, particularly through the availability of medical and sanitary services, an adequate diet and a higher level of education, has increased throughout the country in the case of both sexes, the average age being higher for women (see annex: "Life Expectancy at Birth").

9. In recent years, fertility levels have remained low. Until 1975, gross rates of reproduction suggested that the population would replace itself (1.3 daughters per woman), but over the last 15 years the level has been below one daughter per woman. Current gross rates of reproduction for 1994 are 0.72 daughter per woman. If this trend is maintained, the country may undergo a fall in population and an increase in the average age of the population. The fertility levels are among the lowest in Latin America (see annex: "Fertility Levels").

10. In 1994, 50.1 per cent of the Cuban population were in the age group from 0 to 27 years, 49.9 per cent of which were women. In the same year, 12.4 per cent of the population was 60 years and over, of which 57.0 per cent were women.[1] (See annex: "Average Age".)

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[1] State Committee for Statistics, 1994.

11. Throughout the country's history, major changes have taken place in urban/rural location patterns among the entire population. The growth of urban areas has continued at a constant pace. This has been due to the natural increase in the population (births less deaths), as well as to a process of urbanization of previously rural localities through the construction of new communities and urban-rural migratory movements. It should be pointed out that these changes have been occurring throughout the length and breadth of the country, in each of the provinces that make up the territory of Cuba.

12. It is appropriate at this stage to make a number of remarks of an economic nature to serve as a reference point for a better understanding of comments made subsequently.

13. Cuba's socio-economic situation is not typical of the under-developed countries of the southern hemisphere. From 1960 to 1960, a radical change of the socio-economic structure occurred through the implementation of a development strategy which sought to harmonize economic growth with social policies. This resulted in raising and improving the population's living standards, in eradicating unemployment, redistributing income, in providing schooling for the population, in inserting women into the salaried labour market and in providing technical and vocational training to the labour force.

14. Since 1990, Cuba's economy has been drastically affected by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the community of Eastern European socialist countries. Over a period of one year, the country lost 73 per cent of its import capacity. For the second time in three decades, Cuba was therefore compelled to redirect its economic development strategy under entirely new and adverse circumstances. This resulted not only from the withdrawal of partners who for thirty years had guaranteed a just and profitable exchange among countries which were at different levels of development, but primarily from an escalation of the economic embargo imposed on the country by the United States of America, which, since 1962, represents a loss to Cuba of over 40,000 million dollars.

15. The United States has tightened its embargo at the very time that the Island is facing the need to redirect its entire economy. The United States intensified the embargo through the adoption of measures clearly defined in the provisions ratified by its legislature in 1991, whereby any country engaging in shipping and trading activities with Cuba may be penalized on an extraterritorial basis.

16. Until 1989, Cuba was able to brave the embargo and to absorb its effects, while implementing major economic and social changes. This was due to the will of its people to develop and defend their country and to the trade relations, exchange flows and forms of complementary production which Cuba had established with the socialist countries of Europe and with the Soviet Union in particular.

17. Since 1989, however, with the disappearance of the socialist block in Europe, the relations which Cuba maintained with those countries abruptly ceased. Under those circumstances, in the course of the 1991-1994 period, the Cuban Government gradually introduced a series of radical measures aimed at

solving the most pressing economic problems while continuing the development process, in keeping with the prevailing conditions, and attempting to safeguard the significant social achievements already attained. In the first phase, the decision was made to focus all efforts and resources on high-priority programmes, which inevitably resulted in reducing public consumption levels, albeit in a orderly and equitable manner, and curbing economic activity in many different areas.

18. It later became necessary to implement other measures in order to stimulate the economy, such as opening up to foreign investment, depenalizing the dollar, reorganizing the labour force, restructuring the Government apparatus, instituting private enterprise, and introducing farm and cattle markets as well as new methods of farming and cattle-raising.

19. In Cuba, every citizen is guaranteed the exercise of all inalienable rights.

20. Among the measures implemented in the past five years is a guarantee that the State will provide a subsidized family basket containing staple foods at stable prices for every citizen. Workers' and primary school canteens, children's centres and rural pre-university centres will continue to be supplied with meals for schoolchildren and labourers; so will hospitals, centres and homes for the elderly, and other institutions offering canteen services.

21. The Government has developed a broad housing construction plan for urban and rural areas. In the past five years, despite economic difficulties, a method of building low-cost housing was implemented, whereby the needs of many could be met. Nevertheless, a considerable housing shortage still exists, especially in Havana, where it has not been possible to meet the growing need for housing nor that caused by the decay of existing stock considered uninhabitable.

22. In brief, a systematic approach is being used to reverse the current economic situation by optimizing all available human and material resources.

23. The consolidation of foreign trade by geographic diversification; the presence of foreign capital in such important industrial sectors as oil and nickel, tourism and telecommunications; the financial reform measures taken; the decentralization of business activity; and the implementation of the aforementioned measures, among other factors, all contributed to a more favourable economic picture in 1994 than in the preceding period. As a result of the above-mentioned factors, the slide began to reverse and signs of positive results were reflected in the various indicators, thus showing the correctness and effectiveness of the measures adopted.

24. As a result of the policy adopted regarding women's employment and the efforts made by the country's leaders to prevent a slide in the percentage of women engaged in the labour force at the time of the Special Period, women represented 40.6 per cent of the total labour force at the close of 1994, thus showing an increase over 1989 when the figure was 38.7 per cent.

25. The extent of women's participation in the work force has had a beneficial influence on the situation of the women themselves, as well as on the family and society as a whole, and has been a major factor in changing women's economic role from being dependent on their fathers or husbands to becoming self-sufficient and providers for their family.

26. At present, almost a third (28.8 per cent) of managers are women. In order to give this achievement its proper value, it must be taken into account that only 25 years ago women managers in Cuba represented only a very small minority.

27. It may be expected from women's active political participation as well as from the cultural, technical and professional levels they have achieved, from the experience and capability they have shown in performing a variety of tasks, that a significant number of women will accede to political and administrative managerial posts as well as to decision-making levels.

28. Women figure prominently in the lower echelons of all political, social and mass organizations although, in most cases, the higher the rank, the smaller their participation, principally in managerial posts and in professional grades.

29. However, women account for 22.8 per cent of the representatives in Parliament (the National Assembly), and 15.5 per cent in grass-roots organization.

30. These facts show that discrimination against women still exists. Occasionally, in the minds of some people, it is manifested in the view that men are more suitable because they are better able and have more time to assume leadership; it is also manifested in the failure of some to acknowledge the revolutionary transformation of women and of the role they should fulfil in society.

31. In many families, the woman alone bears the bulk of all responsibilities, including domestic chores, and the care and upbringing of the children. This is because the view still prevails that these are women's exclusive responsibilities and that they are "naturally" assigned to them. Consequently, the male contribution to discharging these responsibilities is sometimes minimal or even nil.

32. It is true that male-dominated attitudes still persist in our society, since a mere 30 years of Revolution are not sufficient to bring about radical changes in traditions and behaviour. These are more likely to alter in parallel with economic, political and social changes and a persistent effort to promote social equality for women at all levels of society.

33. Nevertheless, if we look back over the road we have travelled, we will observe that there have been many achievements on the way towards the exercise of women's right of equality.

34. The Government and society of Cuba have the will the achieve full equality for women in all fields, and, to this end, educational efforts are also being directed at the family with a view to generating awareness that household

responsibilities can be shared, using a persuasive approach to convince and ensure the cooperation of family members.

35. It is undeniable that major progress has been made in raising the awareness levels of Cuban women, as is reflected in their active participation in society, where women have created a new image that goes beyond the mere reproductive function. But experience has also shown that in order to transform the patriarchal culture fundamentally it is necessary to carry out solid and concerted educational, ideological and, political work to create the bases for a culture of social equality between men and women and to do away with the economic and sociohistoric foundaltions of gender inequality.

36. In Cuba, the national machinery responsible for promoting women's equality is the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), a non-governmental organization that has a broad social base, since it encompasses women in all sectors of Cuban society.

37. The Federation of Cuban Women, through its work and because of its reach, is invested with sufficient authority to enable it to act and exert influence directly at the decision-making levels of Government.

38. The Federation of Cuban Women -- through its Chairwoman who is also a member of the Council of State -- is able to exert its influence directly in the areas of policy formulation, programme design, and the adoption of strategies within the Government's highest permanent decision-making body. The body responsible for drawing up women's policies within the structure of the FMC itself is the National Committee, on which all women's sectors are represented: workers, political and administrative managers, scientists, technicians, artists, writers, journalists, athletes, farmers, housewives, retirees, military women, students, and grass-roots and mid-level FMC organizers.

39. The Chairwoman of the FMC is also the head of the Women's, Youth and Child Welfare and Equal Rights for Women Commission of the National Assembly of the People (Parliament).

40. The Federation of Cuban Women maintains close working links with governmental and non-governmental organizations that undertake programmes and projects dealing with women's issues, such as the Ministry of Finance and Price Controls, the Ministry for the Economy and Planning, the National Statistics Bureau, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry for Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Ministry of Domestic Trade, the Cuban Radio and Television Institute, the Banco Popular de Ahorros, the National Union of Writers and Artists, the Cuban Lawyers' Union, the Cuban Journalists' Union, with women's groups from the religious sector, with universities, as well as with the women's departments in universities and the graduate teaching schools.

41. The Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) comprises 3,389,569 women, i.e. 83 per cent of the female population eligible for membership (minimum age requirement 14 years). Over 60 per cent of FMC members are aged between 14 and 39, an indication of the high level of young women's involvement in the organization.

Its planned objectives include:

- Introducing policies and programmes aimed at achieving the full exercise of women's rights of equality in all spheres and at all levels of society.

- Increasing the level of women's involvement in the country's economic, political and social development.

- Implementing programmes and activities to promote the advancement of women;

- Assisting in achieving greater participation by women at the decision-making level;

- Conducting research and studies to enable those problems that most affect women to be identified, with a view to seeking the necessary solutions in coordination with the bodies and institutions concerned;

- Introducing programmes aimed at generating awareness of women's specific problems within the family and in society;

- Establishing and maintaining links with women's organizations and institutions world-wide;

- participating actively in international organizations that deal with women's issues.

42. Membership of the FMC is voluntary. However, its activities and influence reach all women through measures aimed at bringing them together, since the FMC is structured and organized from grass-roots level upwards throughout the country, thus enabling it to achieve widespread involvement, in both rural and urban areas, of female workers, students and housewives, young and adult.

43. In November 1988, a national seminar was held in Havana to evaluate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. This was funded through a project financed by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

44. This seminar proved to be very important in regard to the level of group discussions that took place on what had been achieved and what still remained to be done in order to enhance women's participation, on equal terms, in the fields of health, employment, education and the mass media in Cuba.

45. To the important recommendations and measures emerged from the seminar, all of which remain wholly applicable, must be added the national implementation of those which were adopted at the Platform of Action in Beijing. These will enrich our strategies for Cuban women's progress and integration into the country's economic and social process.

II. LEGISLATIVE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION

46. The Cuban Constitution of 24 February 1976, as amended by the Peoples' National Assembly in 1992, and the supplementary provisions issued in connection with it have updated and enriched the Cuban legal system, which guarantees and safeguards the real and effective enjoyment of a whole series of rights, including the rights of women.

47. The 1992 amendments to the Cuban Constitution further reinforced the principle of equality between men and women, as evidenced by the following paragraph, with which article 44 begins:

> "Women and men shall enjoy equal rights in the economic, political, cultural, social and family spheres".

48. The same article goes on to guarantee these rights by stating further that:

> "The State guarantees that women shall be given the same opportunities and facilities afforded men, with a view to achieving their full participation in the country's development".

49. The 1992 amendments to the Cuban Constitution reinforced the principle of equality between men and women, the law emphasizes that women shall enjoy equal rights with men in the economic, political, social and family spheres.

50. The Family Code (further details of which will be given) enacted on 14 February 1975 was the first legislative instrument introduced in connection with family rights after the triumph of the Revolution. The Cuban Constitution, in its chapter III ("Family"), ratifies the concepts and objectives on which the Family Code is based.

51. Law No. 16 of 28 June 1978 entitled "Children's and Young Persons' Code", which forms part of the legal system and regulates the participation of children and young people under 30 years of age in the construction of the new society, proclaims the principle of women's equality and the cooperation that must prevail in couples' relationships within marriage, in the fulfilment of their obligations in the home, and in the care and upbringing of their children.

52. Among the legislative measures adopted by the Cuban Government, after submission of its first report, with a view to ensuring compliance with the constitutional provisions prohibiting all discrimination against women, is a 1986 efficiency survey of the legal statutes applying to women's equality. As a first step, this legal efficiency survey and evaluation made it possible to identify those standards which, by their application, could be considered to have resulted in discriminatory practices; and secondly, to identify those standards which, due to the passage of time and the changes in the social context, required legislative amendments in order to help implement the established objectives of equality.

53. In conformity with the aforementioned survey, major legal actions were taken, such as the enactment of Law No. 61 of 29 September 1987 amending article 10 of Law 1263 of 14 January 1974 (Maternity and the [female] Worker Law); and

the creation of a committee entrusted with drafting amendments to Law No. 1289 of 14 February 1975 (the Family Code). This amendment covers the compensation of women workers during their maternity leave and helps eradicate inequalities between some women who suffer from certain difficulties during their pregnancies, and those who have normal pregnancies. The measures which were adopted helped eliminate the economic disadvantage of low-income women with respect to maternity leave compensation, thus affording them more equitable treatment.

54. This amendment points to the significance of surveys in determining the degree of legislative efficiency, demonstrating their essential role in reaching a goal of genuine equality, and marking the starting point of a phase of improvements in Cuban legislation. The creation of a committee to draft the bill amending Law 1289 of 14 February 1975 (the Family Code), currently in the stage of implementation, is another important result deriving from the surveys.

55. Law No. 62 of 29 September 1987 of the Penal Code, which treats any infringement of the right to equal treatment as a criminal offence, aims to ensure that the constitutional provisions prohibiting all forms of discrimination against women are implemented.

56. Under this regulation, "any person who discriminate against another, or who abets or incites discrimination, either through offensive displays or attitudes with regard to the latter's sex, race, colour or national origin, or through action to obstruct or prevent, on these same grounds, the latter's exercise or enjoyment of equal rights as laid down in the Constitution, shall be punished". The penalty is deprivation of liberty for a term of six months to two years, or a fine of 200 to 500 times the minimum daily wage, or both.

57. The Penal Code also prohibits the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, and the perpetration of acts of violence (or incitement to perpetrate such acts) against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and lays down the same penalties.

58. Infringement of the right to equality of treatment is an offence that may be prosecuted ex officio. Consequently, the filing of a complaint is sufficient for preliminary inquiries to be initiated and for evidence in proof of the offence to be heard. Once the investigation is completed, the case is brought before the competent court by the Public Prosecutor if he considers that there are sufficient grounds for doing so.

59. As regards the courts of law, the Constitution states that their functions shall be inter alia, to "protect life, freedom, dignity, honour, property, family relationships and all other legitimate rights and interests of the citizens", in addition to preventing "breaches of the law and anti-social behaviour, taking punitive and correctional measures against lawbreakers, and re-establishing the authority of the law in the event of any alleged infringement thereof".

60. A further aspect dealt with by the Criminal Code is the matter of antisocial behaviour, which is treated as one of the elements constituting

danger (article 73.1.C). Any person who habitually violates the rules of public order through acts of violence or who, through other provocative behaviour, infringes the rights of others or who, through his general conduct, breaks the rules of law and order or disturbs the peace is deemed to represent a danger on the grounds of antisocial behaviour.

61. In Cuba, the exercise of prostitution is not dealt with solely through the application of legal measures but through measures of a social, educative, psychological and economic nature as well. From that perspective, our criminal system considers prostitution as representing a danger because of its inherent propensity to lead to all kinds of crime.

62. This type of antisocial behaviour is currently being addressed individually by means of official warnings, with a view to focusing the Government's response on prevention. Nevertheless, pursuant to the criminal policies adopted, ongoing analyses are making it possible to obtain increasingly effective results.

63. In 1986, the National Prevention and Social Welfare Commission was set up, together with the Provincial and Municipal Commissions, made up of representatives from the corresponding State bodies and political and mass organizations. These Commissions have been performing an essential role in the quest for speedy ways and means of eradicating, dealing with and preventing social indiscipline, unlawful and antisocial behaviour, and attitudes that contravene the interests of society and social norms or infringe ethical and moral principles. As a member of the Commission, the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) provides strong support in the area of social work through the contributions of more than 53 000 volunteer social workers.

64. Cuba is a party to various international instruments in this regard:

- Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others - Proclamation of 10 September 1952;

- Protocol and Annex amending the 1904 International Annex and the 1910 International Convention - Proclamation of 11 August 1965.

65. Under the Constitution of the Republic, the Department of Public Prosecution is responsible for ensuring the observance of the law and other statutory provisions and has an active role in criminal proceedings as the representative of the public interest. The public prosecutor may, when necessary, bring charges in criminal proceedings before the competent courts with regard to the infringement of women's rights embodied in the Constitution.

66. The Department of Public Prosecution received direct instructions from the National Assembly and the Council of State. Its organs are structured vertically throughout the country; they are subordinate solely to the Department of Public Prosecution and are independent of all local bodies.

67. As regards the functions of the Department of Public Prosecution, its duties are to bring official charges in criminal proceedings in accordance with the laws; to represent the public interest in all lawsuits in which it is required to intervene under the provisions of the law; to conduct checks on State bodies, private enterprises and other premises to ensure compliance with the law, both ex officio and upon receipt of information or reports of presumed breaches of the law; and to propose to the National Assembly of People's Power or to the Council of State and, where appropriate, to the Council of Ministers, such measures as it deems necessary for the most effective observance of the socialist law.

68. In its chapter III, which deals with the family, the Constitution lays down that the State shall protect the family, maternity and matrimony. Matters relating to the family and matrimony will be discussed here, and the question of maternity will be dealt with in section III of this report.

69. Article 35 of chapter III of the Constitution states that matrimony is a union voluntarily entered into by a man and a woman who are legally free to do so, for the purpose of living together. Marriage is based on total equality of the rights and obligations of the spouses, who are required to maintain the home and see to the all-round upbringing of their children through joint efforts in a manner that is compatible with the development of both partner's activities in society.

70. Men and women of over 18 years of age are allowed to marry. However, in exceptional circumstances and on justified grounds, marriage between a female of at least 14 years of age and a male of at least 16 may take place by authorization of the natural or adoptive father and/or mother, paternal or maternal grandparents or, in their absence, the courts.

71. Public notaries and registrars are empowered to legalize the celebration of marriage.

72. In the case of a consensual union, its de jure or de facto recognition is provided for under Cuban law, on condition that it meets the requirements of singularity and stability. It will be subject to all the legal effects specific to marriage that is lawfully entered into. The rights and responsibilities of each party vis-à-vis the other and of both parties vis-à-vis their children are thus regulated in the same way.

73. Under the terms of article 24, matrimony is contracted on the basis of equal rights and obligations of both spouses. It is laid down that both partners are required to care for the family that they beget and to cooperate with each other in the upbringing, education and guidance of their children. This article also stipulates that the running of the home shall be shared, in accordance with the means of each spouse.

74. Under Cuban legislation, the financial regime governing marriage is the system of joint estate. Upon termination of the marriage, the joint property is divided equally between the spouses or, in the event of death, among the surviving spouse and the deceased's heirs. The division is made by agreement of

the parties or by court decision. In the latter case, the court may rule that certain items of jointly-owned domestic property that it deems necessary for the under-age children's upbringing be awarded to the spouse who is granted care and custody of the children.

75. Section IV, article 53, of the Family Code stipulates that divorce proceedings may be initiated by either spouse, without distinction, and that a divorce may be obtained solely by court decision.

76. As a result of the above-mentioned 1986 legislative efficiency surveys, useful changes were made in the legislation, such as Decree-law No. 154 (Divorce performed by Public Notary - "Notarial Divorce") of 6 September 1994. This legal statute amends the relevant provisions of the Family Code by establishing a new divorce procedure, in addition to the legal proceedings, whereby a public notary may pronounce a divorce by the couple's mutual agreement. The purpose of this amendment was to transfer a certain number of divorce cases outside the legal system without diminishing their legality and social significance.

77. Notarial divorce takes place by mutual agreement and is legal if the court establishes the existence of causes rendering the marriage devoid of meaning for the spouses and the children, and consequently also for society. Under the terms of article 52 of the Family Code, these causes must have created an objective situation where the marriage has ceased to be or can no longer continue to be the union of a man and woman within which rights can be exercised, obligations met and the aims of loyalty, consideration, respect and mutual assistance achieved in an adequate manner.

78. In both the notarial divorce act and the divorce decree, the court decides on the matter of parental authority, and, as a rule, both parents are granted such authority over their minor children.

79. Articles 88, 89 and 90 of the Family Code deal with care and custody. In this connection, article 89 states that "if no agreement is reached by the parents, or if any such agreement is harmful to the material or moral interests of the children, the matter shall be resolved by the competent court, which, in reaching its decision, shall be guided solely by what is most beneficial for the children. Under the same conditions, arrangements shall as a general rule be made so that the children are placed in the care of the parent in whose company they were up to the time of the marital disagreement, with preference being given to the mother if the children were in the company of both parents, and provided, in all cases, that no special circumstances warrant any other solution.

80. The amount of the maintenance allowance for under-age children is to be fixed on the basis of their normal expenses, and also according to the parents' income in order to achieve proportionality in the responsibility of both parents.

81. In addition, the Family Code has undergone various amendments whose purpose has been to adapt its articles to the statutory provisions that have

subsequently been enacted. One of the most important amendments relates to the articles governing parent-child relationships by blood and through adoption and wardship, its aim being to give adopted children the same legal status within their adoptive family as consanguineous children.

82. Parent-child relationships are dealt with in article 36 of the Constitution and also under title II of the Family Code, article 65 of which stipulates that all children are equal and shall accordingly enjoy equal rights and have the same obligations towards their parents, irrespective of the latter's marital status. These stipulations are also set out in detail in the Civil Status Registry Act (Law 51 of 8 July 1985). This law abolishes all classifications regarding the nature of filiation.

83. The appropriate legal formalities for the establishment and acknowledgement of paternity are laid down in title 2, section 2, of the Family Code.

84. Article 45 of the above-mentioned Civil Status Registry Act sets out the relevant regulations concerning registration.

85. Under the regulations relating to adoption, as set forth in chapter III of the Family Code and in Special Provision Two of Decree Law No. 76 of 20 January 1984 on Adoption, Children's Homes and Surrogate Families, any person wishing to adopt must be over 25 years of age, be in full enjoyment of civil and political rights, be able to meet the financial needs of the adoptive child, etc. Children may also be adopted by unmarried women or men who satisfy the above requirements.

86. Developments in the Social Security system in Cuba mean that adequate protection is guaranteed for women and their families in accordance with the rights of all citizens.

87. For example, Law No. 24 of 28 August 1974 and article 46 of the Constitution entitle widowed working women to receive a pension (up to 25 per cent of the total amount originally fixed) in addition to the wage from their own occupation.

88. This was meant to take account of the increasing participation of women in employment and their contribution to the family economy, and thereby attempt to partly offset the loss of the deceased husband's income.

89. In the case of widows under 40 years of age who are fit to work, the total pension entitlement is for a two-year period, in order that they may take up employment in that interval.

90. Widows who are over 40 years of age or are unfit for work, or who have under-age children or dependent elderly parents needing care, are granted a permanent pension paid out of Social Security funds. This right is extended to working women, who will thus, upon retirement, become entitled to receive the amount of their late husband's pension if it is higher than their own.

91. Welfare benefit provisions included in the Social Security system protect citizens in various circumstances, and also afford protection to single mothers in financial difficulties, for the care and support of their children. The benefits may be in cash or in kind or in the form of services.

92. Various aspects of the Health and Safety at Work Act (Law No. 13 of 1977) deal with women, including the following:

- The authorities are required to establish and maintain suitable working conditions and the necessary facilities for women's participation in the work process;
- This law makes reference to the provisions of the Working Women's Maternity Act (Law No. 1263), and stipulates that any pregnant woman who, because of her condition, is prevented from performing her occupational duties will, subject to the findings of a medical report, be moved to a post suited to her physical capabilities and will be exempted from night-shift work during such period of her pregnancy as is laid down by regulation.

93. Cuban citizenship is acquired by birth or through naturalization (article 28 of the Constitution).

94. The following are regarded as citizens by birth: persons born within the national territory, with the exception of children of foreign nationals engaged in the service of their Government or of international organizations; persons born abroad having a Cuban mother or father, subject to completion of the formalities laid down by law; persons born outside the national territory having a Cuban mother or father who has lost his or her nationality, provided that Cuban nationality is applied for in the manner laid down by law; and foreign nationals who, in recognition of outstanding merit displayed in the struggle for the liberation of Cuba, have been deemed Cuban citizens by birth (article 29).

95. Under article 30 of the Constitution, the following are considered Cuban citizens through naturalization:

a) Foreign nationals who acquire citizenship in accordance with the provisions of the law;

b) Persons who have served in the armed struggle against the tyrannical State overthrown on 1 January 1959, provided that they can give proof of such status in the manner statutorily laid down;

(c) Persons who have been arbitrarily deprived of their original citizenship and who obtain Cuban citizenship by express decree of the Council of State.

96. In the case of the marriage of a Cuban woman to an alien under whose national legislation a wife is obliged to acquire her husband's citizenship, a conflict of laws arises with respect to the Cuban Constitution, which embodies the principle of women's choice.

97. This situation is resolved under article 18 of the Cuban Civil Code, which stipulates that the juridical rules applying in such cases must always conform to Cuban law.

98. The statutory regulations governing the rights of citizens to acquire, change or retain their nationality apply uniformly to men and to women by virtue of the provisions of the Constitution and the stipulations of Decree No. 358 of 4 February 1944, which lays down the formalities and procedures. The Constitution guarantees the equal rights of Cuban parents to pass on their citizenship by "jus sanguinis".

99. The Constitution stipulates that the citizenship of spouses and of their children is not affected by marriage or by its dissolution.

100. On the basis of this principle, the Civil Status Registry Act (Law No. 51 of 15 July 1985), which amends and supersedes various articles of the Family Code, lays down the requirements for registration of the acquisition, loss or recovery of Cuban citizenship, and the Regulatory Provisions of that law lay down the rules for its implementation.

101. Law No. 59 of 16 July 1987 (Civil Code) stipulates that full legal capacity to exercise rights and to perform legal acts is acquired at the age of majority (i.e., 18 years), or upon marriage in the case of a minor.

102. Capacity is subject to the restrictions of age and physical and mental incapacity. This means that no account whatsoever is taken of gender in the determination of a person's legal capacity.

103. The right of succession is set out in book four of the above-mentioned Law, which stipulates that inheritance shall be disposed of by last will and testament or by law, the former being known as testate succession and the latter as intestate succession.

104. One chapter of this Law is devoted to the appointment of "specially protected heirs", whom it lists as the children (or, if predeceased, their descendants), the surviving spouse and the ascendants, provided that they are unfit for work and financially dependent on the deceased.

105. In such cases, testamentary freedom is restricted to one half of the estate, and the testator may not place any lien on the portion of the estate that falls to the specially protected heirs.

106. In the case of intestate succession, the order of inheritance is in the direct descending line, i.e., the children and other descendants. The estate is shared out among them in equal parts, but without prejudice to the rights of the spouse and parents, if unfit for work, or of any relatives who are financially dependent on the deceased.

107. The surviving spouse is entitled to an equal share along with the other joint heirs. Also, should there not be any parent or descendant of the deceased alive, the entire estate will pass to the spouse.

108. Regardless of whether divorce proceedings have been instituted, should the death of either spouse occur, the surviving spouse will in all cases retain his or her right of inheritance. This provision puts an end to the former arrangement whereby the share of the inheritance falling to a surviving female spouse consisted solely of the widow's right of usufruct of the deceased's estate.

109. The provisions of the Cuban Constitution establish the right of universal and equal suffrage, by secret ballot, for all Cuban men and women over 16 years of age, and also their eligibility to stand for election provided that they are in full enjoyment of their political rights (articles 132 and 133).

110. The Constitution also stipulates that all citizens shall, without distinction of race, colour or national origin, have access to any government post and public office, according to their merits and capabilities (article 43).

111. The Cuban State promotes citizens' participation in the development of its educational and cultural policies, through social and mass organizations. Social and mass organizations are accorded every facility required for the pursuit of such activities. For example, article 3.C of the Labour Code grants all workers the right to freedom of association and the right to form trade-union organizations.

112. Law no. 54 of 27 December 1985, the "Association Act", lays down the rules governing the registration of associations and their activities. The regulatory provisions of this Law stipulate that the following associations may be formed: social, professional, scientific, or technical associations that seek, through their work, to contribute to the furtherance of research and the application of scientific and technological achievements; cultural and artistic associations that aim to promote and develop artistic education and creative careers; sporting associations whose objectives are the development and practice of sport and physical recreation and education; friendship and solidarity associations that seek to develop ties of friendship between peoples and the study of their history and culture; and any other associations that pursue aims of social benefit, in accordance with the Cuban Constitution (article 54) and the above-mentioned Law.

113. The above-mentioned Law sets out the requirements which individuals must fulfil to establish an association. It also indicates the steps to be taken in order to form the association and enter it in the existing registry.

114. The various chapters of title XI of the Penal Code, "Offences against the normal conduct of sexual relations and against the family, children and young persons", deal with a number of issues such as assault, pederasty with violence, sexual abuse, incest, rape of juveniles, corruption of minors, other acts contrary to the normal development of children, etc. Various criminal offences are defined and graded differently, together with their corresponding penalties, and punishments are laid down for both men and women.

115. The crime of spousal violence is not categorized as such. Its classification is based on the affinity of the violent crime perpetrated with

other types of violent crimes, such as: crimes against life, corporal integrity, human rights, honour, and others which, although infrequent, are nevertheless monitored by means of surveys so that appropriate measures can be taken for their treatment.

116. The Social Prevention and Vigilance Committees, mentioned in paragraph 57, offer a favorable terrain to act on the cases presented and to prevent their recurrence through the educative effect of the community.

117. The Cuban judicial system does not establish any form of distinction or discrimination with regard to the selection of judicial personnel. This is evidenced by the fact that women occupy 40 per cent of the managerial posts within the central machinery of the Ministry of Justice (MINJUS).

118. The total number of persons employed at the Supreme Court is 180, of whom 111 are women, i.e., 61.7 per cent. Of the professional judges, 56 per cent are women, including the vice-president of the Supreme Court and the president of the Criminal Court.

119. Within the Department of Public Prosecution, 60 per cent of the prosecutors are women (674), of whom 115, i.e., 47 per cent hold senior posts.

120. In Cuba, free-of-charge legal services specifically for women do not yet exist. However, these services are available for a modest fee to low-income women, or women who have no means and are generally the recipients of social assistance.

121. The creation and development of Women and Family Counselling Centres under the aegis of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) is currently under way throughout the country. These centres will provide information to women, as well as training and orientation, concerning legal and other matters. As of 1994, a total of 155 such centres had already been established country-wide.

122. Professorships in women's affairs, which are now established at thirteen of the country's teacher training institutes and at the University of Havana, have been promoted with the aim of furthering women's issues in the academic world, for the purpose of research and as a subject on the curriculum, in order to foster gender awareness among post-secondary teacher trainees and the lecturing staff, and to gain an understanding of the status of Cuban women within the family and in society.

123. Various leaflets and other material have been published to provide women with information on the rights available to them. Publications during the past decade have included, for example, "Aspectos jurídicos de interés para la mujer y la familia" ["Legal aspects relevant to women and the family"] and "La legalidad socialista y la lucha contra el delito" ["Socialist law and the fight against crime"].

124. Also, any draft laws, codes and resolutions involving the rights and obligations of Cuban women are discussed among non-governmental organizations (such as the National Association of Small-scale Farmers, the Revolution Defence

Committees, and the Cuban Trade-Union Federation and its member unions) prior to being enacted.

125. In connection with the above, a mass-media campaign was organized to publicize the contents of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to mark the tenth anniversary of its adoption.

126. It should be pointed out that the provisions of the Convention have been incorporated into the various legal instruments so far referred to. Consequently, in the event of any violation, the complainant has to invoke the particular instrument that relates to the case concerned.

127. The Cuban State is ever vigilant to ensure that the law is in keeping with the reality of Cuban women's lives. One example is the recently introduced provision allowing claimants to make use of summary proceedings to obtain maintenance payments, as a means of expediting the process. This new rule was a result of the assessments and effectiveness studies carried out regularly in the country with a view to identifying problems and proposing appropriate solutions, whether legislative or of any other nature.

128. All the foregoing demonstrates the particular interest of the Cuban Government and of political and mass organizations in ensuring that the legal system reflects the economic, political and social changes that have occurred in Cuba since 1965 in areas where women's equality occupies a prominent place.

129. Although we are observant of human rights, the right to health, life, education and freedom that every human being should possess, and which the Cuban Constitution guarantees every woman and man, mention must be made of the aggression against these rights and the extreme tensions to which Cubans are subjected as a result of the hostile policy and the increasingly stringent blockade to which the Government of the United States has subjected Cuba for the last three decades. That policy entails violence in a number of forms -- military, economic, financial, commercial and psychological -- in violation of all the conventions, agreements and declarations of the United Nations.

130. In view of the fact that women are particularly affected by the especially severe consequences of the crisis for family life, the blockade entails an act of particular violence against women and the family.

III. ACTUAL PROGRESS MADE AND CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT IN PROMOTING AND ATTAINING THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN. OBSTACLES TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH MEN

131. In this section, an attempt will be made to provide specific information on the progress made and the obstacles still to be overcome in order to achieve the full participation of women, on equal terms with men, in three important areas: employment, health and education.

132. Mention should be made, by way of introduction, of the efforts being made in Cuba to maintain the standards of social welfare that have been achieved.

These efforts are reflected in the social services provided for the population, particularly in public health and education, which over the period from 1986 to 1990 exceeded 1.400 million pesos per annum.

133. Article 44 of the Constitution lays down that "work within the socialist society is a right, a duty and an honour for every citizen" and that "in provision of employment, account shall be taken of the requirements of the economy and society, of the worker's own choice and of his or her aptitudes and skills". In Cuba, every citizen is guaranteed the right to receive equal pay for equal work (article 42 of the Constitution).

134. In the late 1960s, because of the increasing demand for women's integration into the labour force and the need to set regular targets for this integration, the Ministry of Labour issued Order No. 47 with a view to reserving for women those occupations that fulfilled a minimum set of requirements for their recruitment, particularly since women constituted a group that was to a large extent unskilled.

135. In that same year, Ministerial Order No. 48 was issued with the aim of protecting women in the performance of occupations that might pose a danger to their health or reproductive function. The passage of time and the sharp influx of women into occupations previously barred to them by reason of their sex revealed this Ministerial Order to be both protectionist and discriminatory.

136. This prompted an in-depth analysis of these regulations since, even by the early 1970s, they were proving to be unworkable and an obstacle to further integration into the labour market. As a result of this analysis, Ministerial Order No. 40 appeared in May 1976. This continued to specify prohibitions, but to a lesser extent, and reduced the number of barred occupations.

137. Subsequently, in the Health and Safety at Work Act (under its chapter headed "Women") and also in the Labour Code, the designation "posts not recommendable for women" was introduced in order to take account of the possible harm that they might cause to their reproductive function, and the prohibition on pregnant women and women of child-bearing condition was maintained.

138. The criteria for determining these occupations are based on physical exertion, exposure to air or water pressure, depth, height, and exposure to ionizing radiation and toxic substances.

139. In Cuba, all possible efforts are being made to incorporate the advances of science and technology into the production processes, with a view to alleviating the work of men and women.

140. Over the last 30 years, the legal, administrative and social conditions necessary to facilitate women's entry into the world of work have been established. Over 1,000 day nurseries have been set up, part-boarding and grant-assisted school places have been increased, and vacation schemes and discussion clubs have been developed to assist working families in the upbringing and care of their children.

141. Also, subject to the limits of our financial resources, developments and improvements have been made in laundry faciilities, markets, preprocessed products, etc., in order to alleviate household tasks. Improvements are being made in the quality of service offered by canteens at centres of employment, the benefits of which will be decribed in greater detail under the subsection on health.

142. As a result of action being undertaken by the country's various organizations and bodies, women's integration into the labour force is increasing, and there is an influx of women into occupations of all kinds, both traditional and non-traditional. Indeed, as a product of the population explosion of the 1960s, some one million women joined the labour force during the 1980s, for whom new sources of employment were provided by the State in the midst of the economic blockade and the restrictions then existing in the nation's economy.

143. Women, who represented half of the population in 1994, accounted for 40.6 per cent of the country's labour force, and their presence in all job categories is increasing, notably in the specialist category, where they constitute 61.9 per cent of all employees, as well as 28 per cent of managerial personnel. In all the Priority Programmes of the Special Period the percentage of women workers has been above the national average, e.g., in foodstuffs and science and technology (43.0 per cent), tourism (44.0 per cent), education (69.0 per cent) and health (72 per cent). The exceptions are the sugar industry and non- cane sugar agriculture, where the proportion of women workers is between 20 and 26.5 per cent.

144. There has even been a significant increase in women's participation in those areas that were previously regarded as "unsuitable for women". For example, in 1993, 18.9 per cent of workers in the construction sector were women and they were successfully engaged in the construction of housing and other public works.

145. Women's participation in the country'scientific progress is significant. At present they constitute 43 per cent of the technicians engaged in science and 41.7 per cent of research workers.

146. One beneficial measure implemented on a national scale has been the establishment of the National Commission for Women's Employment, which was set up under Ministerial Order No. 605 issued by the State Committee for Labour and Social Security. By virtue of its structure and composition, this Commission, which operates at the national, provincial and municipal levels and is chaired by the State Committee for Labour and Social Security and made up of representatives from the Cuban Trade Union Federation and the Federation of Cuban Women, constitutes the machinery designed to ensure the continuous advancement of women's status.

147. One of the prime objectives of the Commissions for Women's Employment is to ensure that the levels that have been achieved in women's access to employment and to job skills and promotion are maintained following the

introduction of the new recruitment procedure, which is based on greater flexibility in employment organizations' ability to recruit labour directly.

148. In terms of the structure of female employment, the incorporation of women into the world of work has undergone some interesting variations over the past five years. The growth of the middle and higher specialist category has been confirmed, with the percentage of women in that category rising from 57.7 in 1989 to 61.1 in 1994, thus indicating a trend towards the feminization of the country's qualified labour force. The strength of women in the managerial category has been maintained, while there has been some increase in their weight in the worker category and a decrease in the service workers and administrative categories. These developments are regarded as favourable.

149. Female representation at policy-making level within the Government and the Party has gradually risen throughout the course of this period.

150. In Cuba, sustained efforts have been made during this period to encourage women to assume managerial posts and to perform occupations that call for greater expertise and responsibilities in all aspects of the economy. This idea has always figured among the fundamental objectives of the woen's movement.

151. Women make up 12.0 per cent of the Politburo members and 16.4 per cent of the membership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, these being the supreme policy-making organs in our society. Two women are provincial First Secretaries, and only 10 are municipal First Secretaries. If we bear in mind that active female party membership stands at 26.3 per cent and that women's rates of participation at the provincial and municipal committee levels are approximately 20.6 and 25.5 per cent respectively, it can be seen that their presence at the policy-making level is more representative of their integration as active party members.

152. In the Young Communists' Union, where active female party membership is 43.8 per cent, women make up 36.4 per cent of the National Committee and 24 per cent of the National Buro. The First Secretary of the organization is a woman.

153. In the State Central Administration, the proportion of women occupying deputy ministerial posts has ranged from 5.1 per cent to the 9.4 per cent they now occupy, amounting to 17 posts.

154. Women executives in the State Central Administration have increased from 12.2 per cent at the beginning of the 1980s to 24.5 per cent in the current decade.

155. We currently have eight women ambassadors, seven counselors and five consular officials, one of them a consul general.

156. Great efforts have been made over the last two decades in Cuba to increase the presence and participation of women in the organs of municipal and provincial government. The tables below show the results achieved by these efforts, although for various reasons, including the country's renewed economic

difficulties, there has been a decrease in 1993 at both the national and the local levels.

157. There are no women presidents in the provincial assemblies, only one female vice-president and 10 secretaries, who account for 24.4 per cent of the posts.

158. If one bears in mind that women constitute 49.8 per cent of the population, 40.6 per cent of the labour force and 61.4 per cent of the skilled employment sector, it can be concluded that female participation at the senior levels of local government is still unsatisfactory, and it is to remedying that situation that the work carried out by the women's organization to raise the awareness not only of women but of the family and society is directed.

159. The above remarks illustrate the fact that, although there is a need for assiduous efforts to heighten awareness of women's decision-making potential and capabilities, we do possess the political will and a burgeoning core of worthy women that will bring us to our prime objective, the attainment of full equality for women.

160. The interests and needs of rural women are included in the country's general development programme. However, because of their specific needs and the fact that, prior to 1959, the rural population was the most marginalized and neglected sector, measures aimed at promoting the advancement of rural women have been incorporated into economic and social policy.

161. Under the agrarian reform of the 1960s, 80 per cent of the land was recovered by the State, amd agricultaral enterprises and agro-industrial complexes, amongst others, were set up. The rest of the land remained the individual property of the rural population.

162. As a result of the development of the agricultural economy, the Farming and Livestock Production Cooperatives (CPA) and the Credit and Service Cooperatives (CCS) were established in the 1980s. The CPAs constitute a scheme whereby individual properties are established to be worked in common (a new concept of collective property); another sector of the rural population joined together to work the land in the Credit and Service Cooperatives, under which individual proprietorship of the land is maintained, together with individual rural producers, who retain the ownership of their farms and work them together with their families. In the 1990s, as part of the adjustments of the Cuban economy carried out to increase productivity and efficiency and make better use of resources, the Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC) were established. Under this scheme, land is allocated to be worked by a collective, and the profits are divided among the cooperating producers.

163. Women account for 26.7 per cent of the State-owned agricultural and livestock sector, 21 per cent of the membership of the farming and livestock production cooperatives, 11 per cent of the credit and service cooperatives and 13 per cent of the individual producer category. The social and economic transformations in the way land is used and held in Cuba, and the effects of social policy, especiially in the areas of public health and education, as well

as the opportunities for participation in work and training, have produced favourable effects on the life and habits of thought of rural women.

164. The National Association of Small-scale Farmers (ANAP), an organization which represents and promotes the interests of workers in agriculture, has 26,483 female members.

165. Women also belong to other national organizations, such as the Federation of Cuban Women, the Revolution Defence Committees, etc.

166. One third of the members of the cooperatives who are trained to the higher- or intermediate-grade specialist level are women.

167. The State directs agricultural and livestock-raising activities through two bodies, the Ministry of Sugar and the Ministry of Agriculture. These administer agro-industrial complexes for sugar production and farming, livestock and forestry enterprises. Women are employed in all these programmes as wage-earners, and are beginning to occupy technical and administrative posts in them. Some programmes, such as the Las Tunas Dairy Development Programme, are directed by women.

168. Measures are being implemented to develop additional sources of employment for women in the farming and livestock production cooperatives. Joint plans to achieve that goal are being formulated by the bodies and organizations concerned, and a "Rural Women" network affiliated with the FAO has been established for that purpose.

169. At tree nurseries under the intensive forestry programmes, women have found new sources of employment in territories where such job opportunities do not abound, such as the mountainous regions.

170. Addditional efforts are being made to train female cooperative members in tasks traditionally performed by men, such as the pruning of coffee and cacao plants, the operation of irrigation equipment, etc.

171. Also, with a view to speeding up the overall development of the mountain areas, the Turquino Plan has been devised. Under this scheme, all the economic and social sectors of a community are combined in a spirit of multisectoral and interdisciplinary work. The Turquino Plan aims not only to achieve maximum exploitation of the land and its resources but also to build up a social infrastructure capable of curbing the exodus to the cities and towns. In this Plan, women are recognized not only as active members but as direct beneficiaries.

172. One of the most important efforts being carried out to improve life in the mountainous zones involves an attempt to increase the retention of recently-graduated young people with technical training, who do not always receive the support and understanding needed at the beginning of their working lives in an environment so little known and so full of real material and psychological difficulties. Measures are being taken based on the studies carried out for that purpose.

173. In the case of the small-farmholding sector, i.e., the system of individual land ownership, the women of the family do not receive daily pay for the value of their work if they contribute to the labour force by performing tasks directly related to production or that assist with production. In such instances, their work is regarded as one further domestic chore in the service of the family. Work is being done through the women's organization to raise the self-esteem of these women and their recognition of the value of their work.

174. Temporary work performed on individually-owned farmholdings by women who are not family members is governed by the labour regulations in force in the country.

175. The Cuban State recognizes men's and women's right to freedom of association, and rural women are not barred from this right.

176. Women are not subject to any restrictions on borrowing. Loans are granted to anyone who owns a farm, whether a man or a woman, since the rules do not make any gender-based distinctions.

177. Members of cooperatives nominate a person to represent them in dealings with the banks.

178. With regard to individual producers, such farmers are entitled to receive loans from the State. In the owner's absence, the amount of the loan may be received by the spouse.

179. Neither the land nor the means of production may be offered as security for the repayment of a loan since, under the Agrarian Reform Act, they are both exempt from seizure.

180. The favourable credit terms extended to the rural sector can be seen from the low interest rates on loans for dwellings and the extension of the payment period from 15 to 20 years so that they monthly payment does not exceed 10 per cent of the family unit's income.

181. Loans granted annually to agricultural workers amount to approximately 200,000,000 pesos, of which 70 per cent is earmarked for investment and the rest for production.

182. The loan recovery rate fluctuates between 95 and 98 per cent per annum.

183. All this has made it possible for tens of thousands of comfortable new dwellings to be built at the cooperatives, and for thousands of tractors, bulldozers, lorries and other items of equipment to be supplied to them.

184. Women are beneficiaries of this credit policy, both as individual producers and as cooperative members.

185. Cuban farmers, whether individual producers or members of the cooperatives, sell their produce via the State, and this output forms part of

the national economy programmes. The surplus is expended, freely, in the agricultural and stockbreeding markets.

186. The State accordingly guarantees the necessary marketing conditions, in which no account is taken of gender, i.e., women producers sell their produce on equal terms with men.

187. Agricultural advisory services are provided to the population irrespective of sex.

188. The allocations for the establishment of Basic Cooperative Production Units (UBPC) are based on the goal of increased productivity and knowledge of the collective unit, without discrimination on the basis of sex.

189. Women's right to inherit land is provided for, this right having been expressly conferred on them under the Agrarian Reform Act. A woman's right of claim to the estate operates both under the work-the-land principle and also by plea of exception even if she does not actually farm the estate.

190. In 1978, the Local Miscellaneous Industrial Enterprises were set up for the purpose of manufacturing consumer goods that are not produced by national industry, as well as articles for export and the tourist trade, as a source of revenue for the nation's economy.

191. As a result of the establishment of these industries, new sources of employment are being generated at workshops and for home-based workers.

192. Ministerial Order No. 550 of 1980 regulates contractual relationships arising out of these contracts of employment, and establishes the rights and obligations of the parties.

193. Pay is based on the number of units produced and on quality of production. The workers also receive, by way of paid leave, 0.09 per cent of the total proceeds.

194. This type of employment is preferred by women and by persons with impaired earning capacity, or who are disabled or retired, or who have family restrictions that prevent them from taking on full-time employment.

195. These women are neither undervalued nor marginalized since they are involved in social activities through mass organizations, and they also form themselves into various organizations. Records are made of the duration of their contracts so that, if they subsequently take up permanent work at a centre of employment, these contracts can be taken into account when they receive their retirement pension.

196. There are also some cases of legally authorized self-employment involving people running their own businesses who pay a percentage to the State for the licences to perform these occupations. Women make up 23 per cent of such self-employed persons, carrying out work as hairdressers, seamstresses, manicurists and handicraft workers, among other activities. These persons are not

classified as informal-sector employees in the sense of persons without social insurance, since in Cuba they receive education, social assistance and health and other services.

197. An informal sector does exist in Cuba, but its extent has not been determined. It is a phenomenon that, as already stated, arises from a shortage in the supply of labour for certain services and not as a result of unemployment. Despite the minimal research carried out into this phenomenon, it has been observed that in many instances the people engaged in such activities have a permanent job and take on these other occupations to supplement their wage, on learning of vacancies in trades where State labour is in short supply (plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers, etc.).

198. A number of schemes exist for the purpose of increasing employment alternatives for women through exploitation of local material resources.

199. International cooperation, whether bilateral (governmental and non-governmental) or international, is an important element in achieving the goal of greater integration of women into the country's process of economic and social development, not only because of the financial resources required but also, among other benefits, because of the exchange of experience and information that takes place, the training received and the possibilities of participation offered,

200. Some projects intended to increase employment alternatives for women through the use of local natural and material resources or because of their public health implications have been and are being implemented. Thus, the use of fibres for wickerwork and furniture, the cultivation of medicinal and ornamental plants, the production of honey and its derivatives and the revival of traditional Cuban dressmaking have been encouraged.

201. At present projects are being carried out for the development of marble-cutting to manufacture objects for the tourist trade, the training of sanitation workers, the development of oral contraceptive manufacture and the cultivation of amaranth and soy-beans for food and other purposes.

202. The international cooperation received and being received in the areas described is essentially provided by agencies and funds of the United Nations system such as the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),as well as European non-governmental organizations.

203. Certain objective and, to a greater extent, subjective problems still persist, impeding progress towards the full integration of women into the various branches of the economy. Statistical data confirm that, in many households, responsibility for domestic chores still rests with the woman.

204. To summarize, in the matter of women's social integration there have been major achievements in the field of employment in Cuba, particularly if account

is taken of the severe decline in the world economy as a result of the economic and fimancial crisis, from whose effects Cuba is not exempt.

205. In the area of health care, achievements have been made in many of its branches, putting us on a par with developed countries. Polyclinics and medical and family clinics have been constructed even in the most impenetrable parts of the country, and hundreds of hospitals have been have been built throughout the national territory.

206. Health services in Cuba operate at three levels. Primary care encompasses family practitioners, polyclinics and stomatology clinics. At the secondary level there are clinical-surgical, general, pediatric and gynecological and obstetric hospitals, and at the tertiary level research and service institutes such as the Amejeiras Brothers and Frank Pais hospitals.

207. Preventive and curative medical treatment are provided for the entire population and environmental health is ensured at all levels of the national health system.

208. Secondary and tertiary health-care services support the primary-level care through their municipal, provincial and national hospitals, both general and specialized, and the research institutes that serve the entire population.

209. To provide for women's health care, three major programmes with national coverage have been set up, among others:

The Mother and Child Programme;

The Programme for Early Detection of Cervico-Uterine Cancer;

The Breast Cancer Detection Programme.

210. In 1994 there was one physician to every 204 inhabitants. As regards stomatology services, the ratio for that same year was 1,248 inhabitants per stomatologist.

211. It should be pointed out that medical and hospital treatment, including costs of laboratory work, vaccinations and surgery of all kinds, from the most simple to the successful transplanting of various organs, and the use of the most up-to-date techniques, such as computer-aided tomography, are entirely free of charge to the public.

212. In the health programmes of the Revolution, the Ministry of Public Health has at all times received the support of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) and other mass organizations. Among the major activities being pursued is the Mother and Child Programme, in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Women, Health and Development Programme.

213. Law No. 41 of 13 July 1983 is the basic statutory instrument governing health matters in Cuba.

214. Article 4, subsection (a) of this law establishes the principle of men's and women's equal right of access to medical services by recognizing and guaranteeing the right of the entire population to receive adequate health care and protection anywhere within the national territory.

215. Subsection (b) provides for cost-free medical treatment and health services and State ownership of health-care institutions.

216. Chapter II of this law sets out the regulations relating to preventive and curative medical attention, which is guaranteed for the entire population through the institutions of the national health system.

217. Article 15 provides for the organization of health education activities, and of pre-recruitment and follow-up medical examinations, which all workers undergo not only for the purpose of treating diseases but as a preventive measure.

218. The existing Health and Safety at Work Act (Law No. 13 of 28 December 1987) lays down all the regulations whose purpose is to guarantee safe and adequate conditions for all workers and to prevent occupational accidents and diseases.

219. The regulatory provisions of the Public Health Act were adopted by Decree No. 139 of 4 February 1988. This Decree lays down the rules supplementing the provisions of the Public Health Act. Chapter II, which deals with medical care and social welfare, sets out various regulations guaranteeing equal rights of men and women to medical care and family planning services, and women are guaranteed appropriate free- of-charge antenatal, confinement and post-natal services and adequate nutrition throughout their pregnancy and during the nursing period.

220. Cost-free medical care is guaranteed to all expectant mothers. Institutionalized births are ensured through the network of hospital centres and maternity homes, at which skilled and specialist treatment is available and better care is thus guaranteed for both mother and child. Inplicit in this law is the importance of humanizing the care provided to the woman, with the introduction of the father's involvement throughout the pregnancy and birth process.

221. The Working Women's Maternity Act (Law No. 1263 of 14 January 1974) establishes protection for working women. Under article 1, it specifically provides for medical care during pregnancy, as well as for antenatal and post-natal maternity leave, and for feeding and nursing of the infant; it also grants an allowance to those women who satisfy the requirements set out in its provisions. In this connection, article 10 has been amended by Law No. 61 of 29 September 1987, in ordeer to increase the minimum benefit payable during maternity leave from 10,000 to 20,000 pesos per week.

222. The Labour Code (Law No. 49 of 28 December 1984) provides for the granting of paid antenatal and post-natal maternity leave, as well as hospital and medical services and the free-of-charge supply of medication and food required

by expectant mothers. Also, the Labour Code lays down the rules governing the protection of motherhood and the provision of maternity benefit.

223. Regardless of the nature of their employment, working women are protected by the law, which allows them a total of 18 weeks' paid leave, requiring them to take six weeks' leave of absence after the thirty-fourth week of pregnancy and the remaining 12 after giving birth.

224. In the case of multiple pregnancies or late births, the period of antenatal leave is extended by a further two weeks (also paid). If the birth is premature, the period of leave is adjusted accordingly. Should the infant die, the mother is entitled to six weeks' paid leave. Antenatal leave is established not merely as a right but as an obligation.

225. One of the programmes being pursued in order to continue raising standards of health among women and children is the Perinatological Programme, perinatology being the scientific study of all aspects of gestation, confinement, the puerperium and the newly born infant.

226. For maternal and child care there was, in 1994, one physician specializing in gynaecology and obstetrics for every 1 148 women of childbearing age (15-49 years), i.e., 3.8 per cent of all doctors, and one paediatrician for every 713 children from 0 to 14 years of age, i.e., 11 per cent of the country's doctors, in addition to the general medical care and all other forms of specialist treatment available through referral.

227. One experiment that has produced very good results in reducing maternal deaths and infant mortality is the establishment of maternity homes, following the suggestion of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC). Under this scheme, expectant mothers who live a long way from hospital centres or do not have the necessary amenities in their own homes are taken, in the final stages of their pregnancy, to these maternity homes, where they are given the required care and attention.

228. In 1994 there were 183 maternity homes, which handled a total of 47,153 admissions (see statistical annex,"Medical and social services").

229. The proportion of deliveries taking place in health institutions reached 99.8 per cent in 1994.

230. Despite the quality of medical services, there are still cases of insufficient or inadequate application of appropriate care techniques for infants and expectant mothers, essentially as a result of poor psychological support for patients and their families, unjustified restrictions in information, non-involvement and lack of attendance of relatives (principally the husband) during labur, and poor psychological preparation of the expectant mother for the birth and nursing of the newborn infant, among other factors.

231. Cuba has been gradually reducing the number of maternal deaths, as can be seen from the decline in the rate from 52.6 in 1980 to 44.1 in 1994. The causes of these deaths were toxaemia during pregnancy or the puerperium, other

complications during pregnancy, confinement or the puerperium, miscarriages and haemorrhages (see statistical annex, Direct Maternal Mortality By Causes).

232. All our expectant mothers undergo rigorous, advanced-technology screening for the early diagnosis of congenital deformities. At birth, every infant in Cuba is checked for phenylcetonuria and congenital hyperthyroidism. Perinatological services have been developed throughout the country to provide specialized care during pregnancy, confinement and the puerperium, including neonatological services, intensive child-care facilities, and the national network of infant cardiac centres, all within a highly humane system of hospital attention.

233. During 1994, 147,265 babies were born in Cuba, the vast majority to mothers aged between 20 and 29 years. A further high proportion of these births was to very young mothers (between 15 and 19 years).

234. The number of deaths occurring among infants of less than one year was 1 485, representing a rate of 9.9 per thousand live births -- a figure unprecedented in Cuban history. The main causes of death are perinatal infections, congenital abnormalities, influenza and pneumonia, sepsis and meningitis.

235. As regards mortality among children under five years of age, we have succeeded in reducing the rate from 14.4 in 1989 to 12.8 in 1994. Most of the deaths are caused by accidents.

236. The health-care structure and infrastructure in Cuba guarantees general attention in rural and urban areas, and the results naturally reflect these efforts. Behavioural patterns in the main health indicators, such as infant mortality, are closely monitored and checked on a case-by-case basis by the country's highest policy-making bodies.

237. by way of example, the national infant mortality rate was 9.9 per thousand births in 1994, and there are provinces situated in mountainous and dense parts of the country where the rates are 11.4, 10.1 and 10.5.

238. Cuba is one of the few countries in the world where the agreements stemming from the Bucharest (1974), Mexico City (1984) and Cairo (1994) Population Conferences and the World Conferences on Women (Mexico City 1975, Copenhagen 1980 and Nairobi 1985) are being implemented, and where deciding the appropriate number and spacing of one's children has been proclaimed a fundamental human right.

239. Our State is acting in accordance with the guidelines on family planning intended to ensure the rights and the sexual and reproductive health of women and the Ministry of Public Health is responsible for implementing the National Programme in coordination with the National Centre for Sex Education and the Cuban Society for Family Development.

240. The blockade imposed by the United States of America is still to a large extent obstructing the acquisition of products manufactured or patented by that

country. We currently have various types of intra-uterine devices (IUD) and oral contraceptive agents, although we have not yet reached our target in terms of quality and accessibility. IUDs are fitted free of charge, and other contraceptive products are sold at moderate prices with State subsidies. (See statistical annex, "Contraceptive Methods Used by Exposed Women").

241. The need for contraceptives is not being met. IUDs are available in large quantities but condoms and hormone preparations are in short supply.

242. Within the sphere of application of the National Family Planning Programme, attention also needs to be given to the matter of abortion.

243. Prior to the triumph of the Revolution, there was no tradition of abortion in the country. Abortions were illegal and yet were the main way of dealing with the problem of unwanted pregnancies. Among certain minority groups of the population, abortions were performed at clinics or surgeries with a certain degree of expertise, the middle classes used the services of abortionists who offered a minimum level of technical skills, and the poorer classes, who formed the majority, ran the almost certain risk of complications from abortions carried out in the worst of conditions by personnel with no formal training.

244. In response to concerns expressed by the Federtion of Cuban Women and as a measure aimed at reducing the high levels of maternal mortality due to abortions, the foundations were laid in 1965 for the institutionalization of abortion services for those women who were unable or did not know how to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Abortion facilities are freely available to women up to the tenth week, at no charge, and at the woman's own request.

245. Abortion policy is based on the principle of family planning, which respects the sovereign will of the people, and also on the premise that, until such time as a completely safe and harmless form of contraception exists, women cannot be denied the right to interrupt a pregnancy should circumstances so require.

246. A widespread publicity campaign is in operation, and attention must continue to be drawn to the fact that abortion is a surgical operation entailing risks to a woman's life, since the cases of abortions that could have been avoided through effective and responsible use of contraceptives are all too frequent.

247. As regards sterilization, our services include this option, for both men and women, and the operation is performed using advanced techniques. (Whenever sterilization is undertaken, the woman's age and the number of her children are taken into account.)
Because of deeply-rooted traditions, women resort to sterilization with greater frequency. Therefore, the advocacy of vasectomies as an altrnative offering advantages to couples in planning their families needs to be continued.

248. Before the Revolution, the level of women's active participation in the health sector was very low, the posts occupied by them being primarily in hospital cleaning services and nursing.

249. Since that time, there has been a substantial change in their involvement in this sector, and today we have thousands of female professional employees, representing 57.4 per cent of the total workforce. Women make up 91.5 per cent of nursing staff. The proportion of women practicing medicine is increasing yearly and in 1994 women accounted for 51.4 per cent of te country's physicians and 73.3 per cent of its stomatologists.

250. Noteworthy are the very high percentage of female staff now in the technician category (87 per cent) and their gradual rise within the managerial category, one example being that they hold 47 per cent of the director posts at polyclinics, an indication of the changes in the way women are perceived and of their increasing status and the recognition of their work by the population.

251. Nevertheless, their representation among the nationally subordinate units is only 36 per cent, and within the central organization it is 22 per cent.

252. In 1984 the "family doctor" scheme was set up, the aim of this novel programme being the systematic, efficient provision of the fundamentals of health education and primary care to all family units.

253. In 1994, the total number of professional personnel engaged in the scheme was 25 055, including 7 268 women (i.e.,61 per cent), living in the communities they serve. Their main duties include health promotion, prevention, early diagnosis, timely treatment and rehabilitation, as well as the Mother and Child Action Programme and the Elderly Care Programme and they work in close contact with the community.

254. The family doctors have the opportunity to become involved with and directly influence the public. We must therefore take advantage of that fact and the prestige they are acquiring daily and turn them to good account in the efforts aimed at providing information and guidance on all aspects of sex education.

255. One outstanding example of women's participation and cooperation in health programmes is the very important work undertaken by the health auxiliaries ("brigadistas sanitarias") of the Federation of Cuban Women. In particular, these women, who number more than 70 000, provide efficient health care for families, including those living in remote areas. Together with the family doctors and physicians at the polyclinics, they assist in the care of expectant mothers and newly-born infants, in the detection of cancer of the breast, cervix and uterus, in hygiene and environmental matters, and in sex education, in addition to large-scale operations under the Mother and Child Action Programme and the anti-cancer programme.

256. These health auxiliaries offer their services on a voluntary basis, with the result that they are characterized by their vocation for health work. Their efforts are directed essentially at making the community where they work healthy. They are systematically trained under an agreement concluded more than three decades ago by the Federation of Cuban Women, the Ministry of Public Health and the Cuban Red Cross.

257. In Cuba, breast cancer is the form of malignant tumour most frequently detected in women. It ranks as the chief cause of female deaths from cancer, the mortality rate in 1994 being 18.1 per 100 000 women.

258. Each year, approximately 1 787 new cases of breast cancer are reported by women, and some 759 of those suffering from the disease die.

259. In our country, despite the advances made in public health, breast cancer victims report their condition when it is at a very advanced stage. With a view to the introduction of a subprogramme to monitor breast cancer in Cuba, research into the early treatment of cancer was carried out by the Institute of Oncology during the period from 1980 to 1985. Consultation units that were readily accessible to the public were set up within the mastology service for mammary pathology classification purposes.

260. On the basis of the findings of this research, a series of community interaction studies was planned over the five-year period from 1985 to 1990.

261. The national subprogramme for women at risk of contracting breast cancer is equipped with mammography and ultrasound machines, automatic developers and negatoscopes, as well as with mammography film.

262. As a preventive measure, women are being instructed, through the family doctors and health auxiliaries, to examine their own breasts at least once a month.

263. In the three-year period from 1964 to 1966, cancer of the cervix and womb ranked second among malignant tumours in women. In 1966, it was decided to make a study and investigation of one group of women in the capital. This was then gradually extended to the entire country. A programme for the early detection of cervical and uterine cancer was set up using the Papanicolau method, which is based on sample-taking among large groups of the female population by means of vaginal smear tests.

264. In late 1983, a national workshop was organized. Those taking part were all persons in any way involved in the work of this programme. At the workshop, new and better ways of carrying out the operation were analysed, one of which was to raise the age for performing the first smear test from 15 to 30 years for those women who had already had coitus at some time.

265. The number of women examined in 1994 was 1,053,636. The coverage of the programme is around 65 per cent of the female population aged over 20 years. The number of cases detected this year was 1 070. 98.07 per cent of which were diagnosed at stages at which a high treatment success rate could be guaranteed. (See statistical annex: "Women Examined Under the Cervico-Uterine Cancer Detection Programme").

266. At the present time, the new epidemiological factors connected with the appearance of this form of cancer and the latest views on the practical application of the programme are being analysed. New guidelines have been drawn up to take account of the principal recommendations made by the Pan American

Health Organization as regards monitoring of the programme, including the widening of its coverage. The gradual implementation of these new guidelines began in January 1991.

267. However, despite the role played by the FMC in mobilizing women for the purpose of smear testing, the targets at which we are aiming are still not being achieved, and occasionally the service is deficient.

268. It should be pointed out that a major contribution to the specific work of health education is made by the mass media.

269. Publications by the women's movement, such as "Mujeres" ["Women"] and subsequently "Muchachas" ["Girls"], have throughout this period provided an important educational aid in the area of female and family health.

270. In 1983, the Cuban health authorities introduced a series of specific measures aimed at preventing the onset and spread of AIDS in the country. These measures were increased and intensified in early 1986, when the Cuban AIDS Prevention and Control Programme was launched. Under this programme, all blood received from donors is analysed, and expectant mothers are examined during the first three months of their pregnancy. The marked progression of this pandemic seen in other countries has not taken place in Cuba thanks to the national programme, which is given high priority, in the first instance as a matter of public health, and in which ambulatory care is encouraged. By the middle of 1994 126 patients and seropositive individuals throughout the country were receiving such care.

271. By 1994 16,581,765 tests had been carried out, meaning that approximately 70 per cent of the urban population aged over 15 years had been subjected to analysis. As a result of these investigations, 767 seropositive cases were detected.

272. Cuba's national health system guarantees comprehensive treatment for seropositive patients, including medical and psychological care and social assistance for their families.

273. Clinics exist in five of the country's provinces to deal with such cases. These services are available to everyone on an equal basis, with no distinctions of any kind.

274. Numerous activities have been organized, such as talks, exhibitions, leaflet and pamphlet distribution, and educational campaigns aimed chiefly at young persons and adolescents. However, the changes being sought in public attitudes and behaviour have still not been achieved, and we must therefore intensify the search for new forms of health education.

275. In the course of analysis of our first periodic report to CEDAW, information was requested on the system of "collective feeding". Details of this are given below.

276. The introduction of food grants provided by the State in the form of family cards or vouchers for use at local markets, with nationwide coverage encompassing the entire Cuban population, constitutes one of the factors contributing to ensuring an adequate diet and eradicating malnutrition in Cuba. The foodstuffs covered by this scheme are milk, beef, poultry, beans, rice, oil and fat, wheat cakes, tinned tomatoes and other canned foods such as fruit and vegetable puree for babies, etc.

277. In addition to this arrangement involving the sale and distribution of food to the population, a subsidized feeding programme has been implemented in the country through the establishment of canteens for pre-school children and pupils on a free-of-charge basis, and of workers' canteens operating at a minimal charge or even at no charge for some sectors.

278. The subsidized feeding programme comprises 15,000 individual centres, at which a total of 690,000 people eat a midday and/or evening meal outside their own homes, without this affecting their statutory allowance entitlement. It is estimated that 4,000,000 portions are produced daily at these canteens under the subsidized feeding scheme, and that nearly 3,000,000 people benefit from these meals, since grant-assisted pupils boarding from Monday to Friday eat there both at midday and in the evening.

279. Chemical and biological pollutant control is effected by means of systematic, daily sample-taking carried out on the food eaten by the public, focusing primarily on foodstuffs with a high epidemiological risk. Food samples are conveyed to the various laboratories for toxicological and microbiological examination. Also, evaluations are made of the nutritional value of the foods most dispensed.

280. Dietary inspection of the subsidized feeding programme is carried out by nutritionists working under the guidance and supervision of physicians specializing in food hygiene and nutrition. It is effected by means ofindividual appraisals of the food directly consumed, using techniques for weighing or measuring the size of portions served.

281. The energy value and the protein, vitamin and mineral content are calculated from tables showing the nutritional composition of foods. The findings are compared with the quantities recommended physiologically and suited to individual characteristics.

282. The final topic in this section III deals with education and the progress achieved by women in this area.

283. As was pointed out in the previous report, the literacy campaign was a landmark in the educational revolution. Cuban women participated to a very significant extent in this campaign, accounting for 59 per cent of the literacy trainers and 55 per cent of the trainees.

284. A follow-up scheme was subsequently initiated and, in 1962, the Adult Education Subprogramme was introduced. This has made it possible to continue raising educational standards among the adult population up to the present day.

The campaigns to achieve sixth- and ninth-grade standard were also decisive for adult educational progress in the country.

285. From the 1981/1982 term to that of 1993/1994 1,634,172 adults were graduated from the Manual and Rural Sector Education programme, of whom 686,352 were women (42 per cent). Similarly, from the 1963/1964 term to that of 1993/1994 962,733 adults were graduated from the ninth grade, of whom 32 per cent (305,190) were women.

286. In 1989, the country's illiteracy rate was less than 3.9 per cent.

287. A total of 53,294 housewives attend Manual and Rural Sector Education courses, which extend up to pre-university and language school level.

288. Article 50 of the Cuban Constitution guarantees the right of all Cubans to education. This is ensured in practical terms by the State, which provides the people with opportunities for study according to their aptitudes, the needs of society and requirements of social and economic development.

289. The Cuban State allocates substantial resources to education in our country. All educational expenses, both current and capital (including school construction and equipment), are supplied from State funds approved in the National Budget by the National People's Power Assembly. (See statistical annex: "Educational Budget").

290. It should be pointed out that education, including university education, is free, and that children are provided with free books up to pre-university level.

291. The principle of equality of opportunity in education for both men and women is a reality in Cuba.

292. Female attendance in secondary-school classes is tangible proof of this principle, in view of the graduation figures for the 1993/1994 school year. (See statistical annex: "Indicators").

293. Further substantial evidence of progress in this area is provided by the statistics on women graduates in higher education. (See statistical annex: "Women graduates in higher education, by discipline").

294. According to the report published by the Ministry of Higher Education in 1989, women hold 14 per cent of executive posts at minister level (central office, rector, vice-rector and dean) and 28 per cent of posts at rector level (vice-dean, head of teaching department, second in teaching department). Women account for 45 per cent of the total staff body: 28 per cent of professors, 38 per cent of assistant professors, 48 per cent of lecturers and 50 per cent of instructors are women. Women make up 46 per cent of the research staff.

295. The diversification of specializations within the field of science and technology has contributed to the creation of various categories of employment

in which women are active, this being a natural consequence of the equal opportunities afforded by free education and the right to work, and also by the politico-ideological action being undertaken with the aim of integrating women into non-traditional specialized fields.

296. As stated earlier, owing to the high percentage of women within the labour force, efforts have been necessary on the part of our society to create the conditions allowing workers' families to better fulfil their household responsibilities and duties.

297. It is for this reason that the day-nursery programme is one of the activities that have received priority attention. Today we have 1,102 day nurseries, which look after 150,495 children between the ages of six months and six years, of whom 47.3 per cent are girls. The programme benefits 142,862 working mothers.

298. Training of the staff of the day nurseries is carried out in the country's teacher training institutes, which give training beginning with the twelfth grade and extending to training starting with the ninth basic secondary school grade.

299. Beginning in 1990, over-all attention was given to the children from 0 to 5 years of age not attending day nurseries through the non-formal "Educate Your Child" programme forming part of the "Cuban Community Education For Life Project". The basic purpose of this programme is to achieve the best possible preparation of the family for the education of its children. At present 541,483 children and the same number of families are cared for under this programme, making possible coverage through all modalities (institutional and non-formal) of 84 per cent of the child population from 0 to 6 years of age.

300. The system of student grants introduced by our country has helped to guarantee access by women to centres of learning in any of the specializations offered under this scheme.

301 The grant system provides board and lodgings, medical care and a living allowance paid by the Cuban State, which means that young people's participation in it carries no distinctions as to gender or place of residence. As can be seen from the tables below, the number of student boarders has risen significantly over the years, which is proof of the assistance these grants offer to working families. (See statistical annex: "1994-1995 Enrolment").

302. Under this grant scheme, through a combination of study and work, boys and girls are organized in mixed teams and share all kinds of agricultural tasks, cleaning work and other services.

303. In addition, job skill schools ["escuelas de oficios"] have been set up to ensure the training of qualified workers in accordance with the country's needs. At present there are a total of 162 schools of this type and 527 polytechnical centres in which job skill training is offered according to need. Women make up 31.0 and 47.8 per cent of the respective enrolment in these institutions.

304. Progress has also been achieved in integrating women into the industrial sector, in fields that were traditionally the preserve of men, such as the sugar industry, non-electrical machine construction, chemicals, the food industry and construction. However, efforts need to be continued in directing women towards these fields, with emphasis being placed on its main activities. (See statistical annex: "Graduates in technical and vocational training specializations").

- Within the system of general education, technical subjects are given a larger place;

- The vocational training and guidance programme includes:

  - Discussion clubs;

  - Talks, lectures and debates at centres of secondary education;

  - The "open door" method, which operates at universities to provide young people with an opportunity to learn about and familiarize themselves with the various specializations;

  - Programmed visits to centres of production and scientific research;

  - Circulation of the book entitled "Que voy a estudiar?" [What shall I study?] aimed at secondary-school pupils, and of press articles on a variety of specialized fields.

305. Although it is true that we do not intend to set a target of 50 per cent for the various university courses, we are alert to the figures, since technical courses were for a long time regarded as not "suitable for women", and we need to establish firmly the view that a woman must not feel restricted or be barred from the course of study that she has chosen as her vocation or she believes to be important to the country's economic or scientific development.

306. As a result of deeply-rooted attitudes, preferences are still being shown for particular specializations, even though the Vocational Training and Guidance Programme does not make any distinctions between men and women.

307. At times, not only have such prejudices been expressed in connection with female graduates' places of work, but they have also been observed in the assessment made by a number of organizations of women's ability to do certain jobs when deciding on their admission to courses in some specialized subjects.

308. For this reason, opportunities for access to certain branches of study have been monitored by a systematic analysis among organizers or operators of these courses. During the last decade, this work was carried out by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Federation of

Cuban Women. As a result of these efforts, there are at the present time no gender-based restrictions to enrolment for any specialized secondary-level or university-level courses.

309. The school retention rate was 97.8 per cent in the 1994-1995 academic year.

310. School attendance in the age range from 6 to 14 years (i.e., from the first to the ninth grades) came to 96.8 per cent in the 1994-1995 academic year. For that same year, it was 63.4 per cent in the 15- to 17-year-old age group. As these figures show, it is precisely at these ages that the highest drop-out rate is to be found. Drop-outs because of marriage and personal and family problems continue to be a problem and are still influenced by stereotped roles in the family and the idea that it is women who must deal with family problems.

311. As already stated, despite the progress achieved in lowering the female student drop-out rate, we cannot be satisfied, and the interchange of experiences between the Ministry of Education and the various mass organizations, student bodies, the community, etc., is being increased in an effort to attain this goal.

312. In Cuba, one of the aims of educational policy has been permanent education for the population. For young and adult women who for different reasons have abandoned their studies before graduating, an Adult Education Subprogramme has been set up. This scheme, which reaches even the most remote and sparsely inhabited areas, comprises the following levels of instruction:

- Elementary or primary (Basic-level, Manual and Rural Sector Education) in four study sessions or semesters.
  At this level some 1,926 women are enrolled and an average of 400 graduate each semester.

- Basic secondary (Secondary-Level Manual and Rural Sector Education) in four study sessions or semesters. Some 2,476 are enrolled and 600 graduate each semester.

- Advanced secondary or pre-university (Faculty-level Manual and Rural Sector Education) in six study sessions or semesters.

  Around 30,905 women, mostly young housewives, enrol each semester and approximately 4,200 graduate each semester.

- Around 102,240 persons enroll for technical and vocational or job skill training in which they reach the secondary or qualified worker level and 7,149 graduate each semester.

- Language courses. These courses provide women with the standard of proficiency needed for them to enter the

world of work. Around 17,987 enrol each semester.

- Open University courses. Young and adult women who have passed the advanced secondary level may embark on a university course of study by this method.

313. In addition, Adult Education offers alternative community courses intended to increase the level of training of the population and women in particular.

314. Thus, the Manual Arts Academies, established solely for women, had an enrolment of 20,058 housewives in 1994-1995. Other alternative programmes, also developed by Adult Education, have an enrolment of 65,000 women, representing 62.4 per cent of their total enrolment.

315. Special Education constitutes a network of schools and institutions, means of care, aids and orientation and training services made available to girls and boys in at-risk categories with special educational needs and to their families and surroundings in general. (See statistical annex: "Special Education").

316. The aim of this education is to achieve maximum development of the potentialities of its pupils; to give them basic cultural training and to give them the job training that will enable them to participate in the country's productive and social activity. There are 457 special schools in the country. (See statistical annex: "Number of Special Education Schools").

317. Children prevented from attending school on account of physical problems or because of long periods of hospitalization are given classes at home or in the hospital.

318. These schools have not only advanced-level graduate teachers who have been trained in special education but also speech therapists, educational psychologists, psychometricians and experts in injuries, orthopaedics, physical deformities and mental disorders, among other fields.

319. As part of the continuous improvements being made in the National Education System, it was felt necessary to include a variety of topics dealing with sex education. These have been introduced, from the earliest grades, into the biological and socio-ethical aspects of the study of nature and the human body.

320. In 1977, the National Working Group on Sex Education (now called the National Working Centre for Sex Education) was established as an institution attached to the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of People's Power on Childhood, Youth, Equality and Women's Rights.

321. This group comprises representatives from the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education, the Young Communists' Union (UJC) and the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC). It also maintains close working links with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Higher Education. The Centre has carried out creditable work, which has contributed significantly to the progress achieved in this area.

322. In addition, the Federation of Cuban Women, the Cuban Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Education have drawn up guidelines for an in-depth study of the family, with the aim of gathering further data in order to implement a work programme that will contribute to the strengthening of the family as a basic institution of our society.

323. A Family Study Group has been set up which will be headed by the FMC and made up of representatives of the Social Studies Centre of the UJC, the National Centre for Sex Education, the Commission for Social Welfare and Prevention, the Centre for Psycho-sociological Research of the Ministry of Science, the Ministry of Justice, the University of Havana, the Faculty of Psychology and the Ministry of Education. Our objectives will be first to make an overall analysis of all the research that has so far been carried out in our country into the family; and secondly to analyse each of the conclusions reached and recommendations made, with a view to enhancing and shaping the practical application of all economic, social, legal, educational, teaching, cultural and other measures that will promote the advancement of the Cuban family.

324. A joint action between the Federation of Cuban Women and the Ministry of Education has been in operation since the time when the women's organization was formed. This seeks to forge the closest possible links between schools on the one hand and the family and the community on the other. Efforts are currently being directed at helping to raise educational standards.

325. Relationships between the grass-roots organizations of the FMC and the schools are being strengthened, and the work of FMC representatives on school boards and the Mothers for Education Movement is being monitored. Among the alternative forms of parent education being offered, discussions are in progress on psychological teaching materials that deal with various family issues and their educative function.

326. In connection with this topic of the family, it should be pointed out that, following the proclamation by the United Nations of 1994 as the "International Year of the Family", a National Coordinating Committee for the IYF comprising governmental and non-governmental organizations was set up in Cuba.

327. The image of women in general, and of Cuban women in particular, as projected by textbooks in our country's schools, is consistent with the policy guidelines on women that are contained in the documents produced by the Cuban Communist Party Congresses and by the Federation of Cuban Women, since women are portrayed in educational material as leading figures engaged in paid or voluntary, artistic or scientific work in the defence and exercise of rights of social equality in general. This achievement is the result of previous revisions carried out by the organizations concerned and by the Federation of Cuban Women.

328. Studies on women are part of the country's scientific policy. Research is conducted by all those organizations that deal with women's issues, with a view to assessing the level of progress in attitudes and practices relating to

equality, one notable contributor to this effort being the Federation of Cuban Women.

329. Making every family member aware of the need to share household tasks is a priority aim of our work, since the principle underlying our efforts is that full equality can be attained only when it covers the area of the family and when a father's caring for his sick child so that his wife can go to work is seen as a natural and everyday occurrence.

330. These achievements are not just the realization of a desire. They are the product of unstinting work on the part of organizations and institutions within the country. For centuries, outmoded views have persisted, and cases still exist today where women themselves bring up their sons and daughters differently in the matter of household duties.

STATISTICAL ANNEX

TABLE 1

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH
1990-1995

Both sexes	75.7
Women	77.6
Men	73.9

Source: Annual Report of Ministry of Health, 1990

TABLE 2

FERTILITY RATES

CATEGORIES Fertility rate by age group (per 1,000 women)	1985	1990	1993	1994
15 - 19	92.9	77.5	68.0	63.9
20 - 24	126.8	113.9	95.0	93.7
25 - 29	95.7	97.4	79.0	78.2
30 - 34	46.5	56.1	39.5	39.4
35 - 39	18.5	17.5	15.5	14.9
40 - 44	3.9	3.3	2.3	2.1
45 - 49	1.2	0.3	0.4	0.4
Overall fertility rate (per 1,000 women of child-bearing age) 15 - 45	66.1	62.1	49.7	48.2
Global fertility rate (children per woman)	1.93	1.83	1.48	-
Gross reproductive rate (daughters per woman)	0.94	0.89	0.72	-

Source: Cuba Demographic Yearbooks 1986-1988. Statistical Research Institute.
Cuba Demographic Yearbook 1990. Statistical Research Institute.
State Committee for Statistics. MINSAP 1994
National Statistical Office 1995.

TABLE 3

AVERAGE AGE

1983	31.0
1993	32.9

TABLE 4

MEDICAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Number of Maternity Homes and Admissions by year

Year	Number of homes	Number of admissions
1985	105	36 871
1988	143	43 572
1990	152	44 840
1991	159	45 345
1992	164	43 826
1993	176	44 513
1994*	183	47 153

Source: Cuba Statistical Yearbook, 1988. State Committee for Statistics (pp. 565, 575, 576).
Annual Report 1991, Ministry of Health. (From diskettes). For 1990 and 1991.
Annual Report 1992, 1993 and 1994. Ministry of Health. (From diskettes). For 19911, 1992 and 1993.

* Provisional

TABLE 5

DIRECT MATERNAL MORTALITY BY CAUSE

(Number of deaths per 100,000 live births)

Causes	1980	1993	1994*
Abortion	15.3	4.6	6.1
Puerperal complications	11.7	3.3	10.2
Haemorrhage during pregnancy and delivery	5.8	3.3	2.7
Toxaemia in pregnancy and puerperal period	3.6	2.6	5.4
Other complications in pregnancy, delivery and puerperal period	16.1	13.1	19.7
Total	52.6	26.9	44.1

* Estimated

TABLE 6

CONTRACEPTIVE METHODS USED BY URBAN AND RURAL WOMEN

(Percentages)

Method	Total	Urban	Rural
Use some method	88.0	87.8	88.4
Effective methods	85.0	85.1	85.0
IUD	40.2	41.8	36.5
Pill	15.2	14.6	16.6
Condom	2.6	3.0	1.6
Female steilization	26.7	25.3	30.3
Diaphragm	0.2	0.2	0.0
Other chemical methods	0.1	0.2	0.0
Ineffective methods	3.0	2.8	3.4
Coitus interruptus or withdrawal	1.4	0.7	3.4
Rhythm	1.1	1.4	0.3
Douche	0.5	0.7	0.1

Source: State Committee for Statistics, 1987

TABLE 7

WOMEN EXAMINED UNDER THE PROGRAMME FOR EARLY DETECTION OF CERVICAL-UTERINE CANCER

Year	Number	Rate
1985	550 951	176.2
1990	904 709	254.5
1993	1,021 512	269.3
1994*	1,053 636	272.6

* Estimated
Rate per 1,000 women aged 20 years or over.

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Ministry of Health for each year.

TABLE 8

BUDGET FOR EDUCATION

Year	Millions of pesos
1957-1958	79.4
1958-1959*	76.7
1949-1960	84.8
1965	270.2
1970	361.0
1975	808.5
1980	1340.8
1985	1696.8
1990	1853.9
1991	1646.3
1992	1542.5
1993	1443.4
1994	1360.9

* Year of victory of the Revolution

TABLE 9

EDUCATION INDICATORS*

	1993/1994 School year Total	Number of women	Percentage of women
Total graduates	424 114	223 101	52.6
Intermediate	224 056	121 444	54.2
Basic secondary	108 309	55 888	51.6
Pre-university	53 321	34 413	64.5
Specialist and professional	57 481	27 350	47.6
Skilled manual	6 824	415	6.1
Teacher training	4 945	3 793	76.7

* Not including full training courses of other organizations

Source: Cuba Statistical Yearbook, 1994

TABLE 10

WOMEN GRADUATES IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY DISCIPLINE (1993-1994)

TOTAL	58.5
Technical sciences	39.5
Natural sciences and mathematics	62.5
Medical sciences	71.0
Agricultural sciences	51.8
Teacher training	64.7
Economic sciences	66.5
Social sciences and humanities	66.6
Physical education	53.8
Art	26.5

Source: State Committee for Statistics Report

TABLE 11

SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Level	Total	Semi-boarders	Per Cent	Boarders	Per Cent
Total	1 810 493	475.8	26.0	226.0	12.4
Pre-school	139 434	51.0	31.8	-	-
Primary	1 007 769	360.6	35.8	9.7	1.0
Secondary	663 290	64.2	9.7	216.3	32.8

Note: Pupils in day nurseries (ages 0-4) and complete secondary-level training courses given by other organizations not included.

TABLE 12

GRADUATES IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SPECIALIZATIONS

(Intermediate-technical)

Specializations	1979-1980		1984-1985		1991-1992	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Total	32 808	25 451	41 696	39 327	32 825	34 162
Sugar, chemical and food industry	499	665	1 131	1 207	754	1 642
Electronics, automation and communications	605	246	954	363	1 033	1 004
Construction	1 236	718	1 848	1 417	2 785	3 500

Source: Ministry of Education, 1993

TABLE 13

SPECIAL EDUCATION

	1959*	1994/1995
Schools	14	457
Enrolment	134	53 596
Teachers	20	14 632

* Approximate figures

Source: Ministry of Education

TABLE 14

NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS

School year 1994-1995

Total number of schools	457
Mentally retarded	264
Deaf or hard of hearing	18
Blind or defective vision	7
Strabismus or amblyopia	15
Behavioural problems	41
Speech problems	10
Retarded physical development	101
Physical motor impediments	1